

In response, please amend the claims as follows and consider the following remarks.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please **AMEND** claims 9, 23, 26 and 27, as shown below, and **CANCEL** claims 1-8 and 13-21, without prejudice, including without prejudice to the filing of a divisional application, claims of the CIP application, Ser. No. 10/999,455, and the elected claims of this application.

1.-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended)

A fuel tank, comprising:

a shell defining an interior for holding fuel and having an opening for receiving fuel into the interior of the shell, the shell having at least an outer layer of a polymeric material and a vapor barrier layer of a polymeric material different than the polymeric material of the outer layer;

a separate **one-piece fuel** fill nipple having an outer surface and an inner surface defining a passage extending between a pair of generally opposed open ends of the fill nipple with one open end attached to the shell with the passage aligned with the opening in the shell for allowing fuel to flow through the passage and into the shell, the fill nipple has an inner layer of a polymeric material forming the inner surface of the fill nipple, an outer layer of polymeric material forming the outer surface of the fill nipple, a vapor barrier layer of a polymeric material different than the polymeric material of the inner

and outer layers and disposed between **and adhered to** the inner and outer layers, and a pair of adhesive layers with one adhesive layer disposed between the outer layer and the vapor barrier layer and the other adhesive layer disposed between the inner layer and the vapor barrier layer, the vapor barrier layer being separate and spaced from the vapor barrier layer of the shell;

at least ~~one~~ **the outer** layer of the shell and the **inner layer of the** fill nipple welded together circumferentially continuously around the opening; and

a separate cover with an inner layer of a polymeric material welded to the **outer layer of the** shell and **circumferentially continuously around the fill nipple and welded to the outer layer of the fill nipple circumferentially continuously around** the fill nipple and spanning the area of attachment of the fill nipple to the shell and with a vapor barrier layer of a polymeric material different than the polymeric material of the inner layer of the cover **and adhered to the inner layer of the cover**.

10. (Previously Presented)

The fuel tank of claim 9 wherein the cover includes an EVOH polymeric vapor barrier layer.

11. (Previously Presented)

The fuel tank of claim 9 wherein said one end is defined in part by a radially outwardly extending flange that presents at least a portion of the inner surface for attachment to the shell and the cover is attached to said flange.

12. (Previously Presented)

The fuel tank of claim 11 wherein a plastic weld joint attaches the flange to the shell and the cover overlies the weld joint.

13.-21 (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented)

The fuel tank of claim 9 wherein the shell includes an outer layer and an inner layer, and the inner layer of the fill nipple is attached to the outer layer of the shell and the cover is attached to the outer layer of the fill nipple and the outer layer of the shell.

23. (Currently Amended))

A fuel tank, comprising:

a shell of a first polymeric material **and** defining an interior for holding fuel and having an opening for receiving fuel into the interior and a vapor barrier layer of a second polymeric material different than the first polymeric material **and adhered to the first polymeric material**;

a separate **one-piece fuel** fill nipple having an outer surface and an inner surface defining a passage extending between a pair of generally opposed open ends of the fill nipple with one open end at least partially overlapped with and attached to the shell with the passage aligned with the opening through the shell for allowing fuel to flow through the passage and into the shell, the fill nipple has an inner layer of a polymeric material forming the inner surface of the fill nipple, an outer layer of polymeric material forming

the outer surface of the fill nipple, and a vapor barrier layer between the inner and outer layers ~~and~~ of a polymeric material different than the polymeric material of the inner and outer layers of the fill nipple, **adhered to the inner and outer layers of the fill nipple and separate from the vapor barrier layer of the shell**, wherein the **separate** vapor barrier layer **of the fill nipple** overlies the shell vapor barrier layer along the entire extent of the overlap of the fill nipple and shell providing at least two vapor barrier layers along the entire extent of the overlap of the fill nipple and shell **and at least a portion of the two overlapping vapor barrier layers being spaced apart circumferentially continuously around the opening of the shell**; and

the first polymeric material of the shell and an adjacent layer of the fill nipple are of the same polymeric material and are welded together circumferentially continuously around the opening of the shell.

24. (Previously Presented)

The fuel tank of claim 23 wherein the end of the fill nipple not attached to the shell is constructed and arranged to carry at least a portion of two separate fuel system components.

25. (Previously Presented)

The fuel tank of claim 23 wherein said one end includes a radially inwardly extending flange and said another end includes a radially outwardly extending flange.

26. (Currently Amended)

A fuel tank, comprising:

a shell defining an interior for holding fuel and having an opening for receiving fuel into the interior, the shell including a vapor barrier layer;

a separate **one-piece fuel** fill nipple having an outer surface and an inner surface defining a passage extending between a pair of generally opposed open ends of the fill nipple with one end circumferentially continuously attached to the shell with the passage aligned with the opening for allowing fuel to flow through the passage and into the interior of the shell, the fill nipple has an inner layer of material forming the inner surface of the fill nipple, an outer layer of material forming the outer surface of the fill nipple, a vapor barrier layer of a polymeric material between the inner and outer layers **and different than the polymeric material of the inner and outer layers**, and a pair of adhesive layers with one adhesive layer disposed between the outer layer and the vapor barrier layer and the other adhesive layer disposed between the inner layer and the vapor barrier layer, the vapor barrier layer of the fill nipple being separate and spaced from the vapor barrier layer of the shell **circumferentially continuously around the opening of the shell**; and

a separate cover **having polymeric inner and outer layers and a polymeric vapor barrier layer between and adhered to its inner and outer layers and of a polymer different than the polymer of its inner and outer layers, the separate cover being** connected to the shell and the fill nipple and spanning the area of attachment of the fill nipple to the shell **and being welded to the fill nipple circumferentially**

continuously around the fill nipple and welded to the shell circumferentially
continuously around the fill nipple and the opening through the shell.

27. (Currently Amended)

A fuel tank, comprising:

a shell defining an interior for holding fuel and having an opening for receiving fuel into the interior and a vapor barrier layer of a polymeric material;

a separate **one-piece fuel** fill nipple having an outer surface and an inner surface defining a passage extending between a pair of generally opposed open ends of the fill nipple with one end at least partially overlapped with and attached to the shell with the passage aligned with the opening allowing fuel to flow through the passage and into the interior of the shell, the fill nipple has an inner layer of **polymeric** material forming the inner surface of the fill nipple, an outer layer of **polymeric** material forming the outer surface of the fill nipple, and a vapor barrier layer of a polymeric material between **and adhered to** the inner and outer layers **and separate from the shell vapor barrier layer,** wherein the **fill nipple** vapor barrier layer overlies the **fuel-tank shell** vapor barrier layer along the entire extent of the overlap of the fill nipple and shell providing two vapor barrier layers along the entire extent of the overlap of the fill nipple and shell **with at least a portion of the overlapped two vapor barrier layers being spaced apart circumferentially continuously around the opening of the shell.**